Enthusiastic Grand Opening Held Tuesday At New EC Wal-Mart Store

Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. opened its 511th Discount City store in El Campo Tuesday at 9 a.m. in ceremonies that closely resembled a high school pep rally as Sam M. Walton, chairman of the board, enthusiastically addressed the store's approximately 90 employees and the many special guests, visitors and customers who were in attendance.

Also leading the opening ceremony was Bill McFarland, manager of the new 65,500 sq. ft. Wal-Mart Discount City store here.

McFarland joined Wal-Mart in April, 1980 as an assistant manager in Little Rock, Ark. He is a native of Chicago and for many years was employed in the retailing business in Chicago and Omaha, Neb.

Joining McFarland in the management team will be three assistant managers, Bob Nickleson, Richard Choate and Sy Leal.

"We are excited about our new store, and we are looking forward to getting acquainted and servicing the merchandise needs of the community," McFarland said.

He said the El Campo store has $1.9 million in merchandise and 52,000 items for sale.

In speaking to the El Campo Rotary Club last week, he said, "Our intention is to help El Campo grow — not to hurt anyone. Our store is here to serve the community. I'd appreciate any comments from the community to make it better."

Larry Fennell serves as manager of District 37, where he has the responsibility of 11 Wal-Mart stores. He and his family live in Victoria.

A Company On The Move

During 1980, Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., headquartered in Bentonville, Ark., had the greatest record of growth in its 18-year history. Fifty-four new Wal-Mart Discount City stores opened, 13 stores were enlarged, two stores were relocated and expanded and several existing stores were remodeled.

Continuing its expansion plans, the company projects approximately 60 new stores will have opened this year.

The company's sales have shown steady gains, with corporate volume exceeding $1.6 billion ending Jan. 31, 1981, an increase from $1.2 billion for the previous fiscal year. Wal-Mart, with stores in 13 states, has done $2.5 billion worth of business this fiscal year, with four months remaining.

Wal-Mart Today

Generally, Wal-Mart's stores range in size from 30,000 to 80,000 sq. ft. of building area, with the average store size being approximately 47,000 sq. ft.

With few exceptions, the company's expansion program is directed toward communities within a 600 mile radius of its general office and distribution and warehousing facilities.

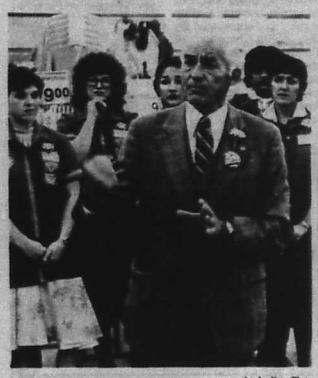
Variety Store Beginning

Not unlike other retail discount chains, Wal-Mart had its beginning in the small town variety store business.

The company's founder and chairman of the board, Sam M. Walton, opened his first Ben Franklin store in Newport, Ark. in 1945. One year later, joined by his brother, J.L. "Bud" Walton, now senior vice president, the two brothers began to expand their variety store operations. Between 1945 and 1962 they opened 15 Ben Franklin stores which served as the base for what was to become Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.

Wal-Mart's first Discount City store opened in Rogers, Ark. in Nov. 1962.

In Oct. 1970, Wal-Mart became a publicly-held corporation, and was listed on the Over-The-Counter market. The company's stock began trading on the New York Stock Exchange Aug. 25, 1972.



Leader-News Photo

Mr. Wal-Mart

Sam M. Walton, founder and chairman of the board of Wal-Mart Stores Inc., presided over grand opening ceremonies of the El Campo store Tuesday morning.

Leader-News Photo

Hooray, The Ribbon's Cut

Bill McFarland, left, manager of the new Wal-Mart Discount City, led his staff in a big cheer after the ribbon was officially cut at 9 a.m. Tuesday. Joining Wal-Mart officials for the ribbon cutting were El Campo City Council members and directors of the El Campo Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture and the El Campo Economic Development Corporation.

Boll Eradication Hopeful

Cotton farmers are facing both bad and good news about their long-time enemy, the boll weevil.

The bad news, according to National Cotton Council president Frank M. Mitchener Jr., centers on reports that the boll weevil, like the medfly in California, is making a comeback in major cotton areas.

"State extension entomologists in the Mid-South, for example, reported severe boll weevil infestations in many counties this summer, with losses and control costs exceeding those from budworms and bollworms for the first time in several years," Mitchener said.

The Sumner, Miss., grower added that the resurgence of the pest poses a serious threat to cotton in many areas over the next few years.

"Reports indicate boll weevils are causing some concern even in Arizona," Mitchener said.

The good news, according to the Council president, is contained in reports by U.S. Department of Agriculture terms charged with evaluating Beltwide boll weevil / cotton insect management programs.

"The reports state that both the eradication trial in North Carolina and the optimum management trial in Panola County, Miss., were technical and biological successes," Mitchener explained.

"We are greatly encouraged by the finding in the eradication trial, for example, that insecticide applications were reduced 88 percent from the pre-trial average for 1974-77. This compares with only a 25 percent reduction in the state outside the trial area," the Council president said.

"Also convincing was the evidence that populations of natural enemies of bollworms and budworms during July and August, 1980, were almost doubled those found in adjoining areas under conventional control," he added.

Experience of Marshall Grant, a Graysburg, N.C., grower in the eradication trial area, backs up the evaluation reports.

"For the five years preceding the trial, my average insecticide application was between seven and eight per year, with a high of 11. The past two years the average has been less than one per year and I've found that worm control is more manageable in the absence of weevils. Growers here are very enthusiastic about the program," Grant reported.

"Marshall's experience certainly underlines the environmental and economic implications. Both are important to growers and the public," Mitchener said.

Clarence Leary, Chowan County, N.C., producer and an insecticide dealer in Edenton, said that his county has been rid of weevils since June, 1978.

"I'm sold on the program. This year we handled heavy pressure from worms, relying mainly on beneficial insects and biological insecticides," Leary reported. "We're more bullish on cotton now than we've been since World War II."

Chowan County is located from other cotton in the trial area and was the site of a pre-eradication test.

Dr. Milton Ganyard, a private pest management consultant, Raleigh, N.C., said the benefits of the program clearly continued in 1981, a year after its completion. He provided insect control advice to farmers accounting for one-fourth of the average in the eradication zone.

"With the boll weevil out of the picture, we had lower costs and more flexibility in our insect control program. We estimate that applications in the eradication zone averaged less than three this year compared with 10-12 outside the area," Dr. Ganyard reported. He was program manager of the 1978-80 eradication trial.

Mitchener explained that a National Research Council report varies in some respects with the USDA team evaluations.

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